



# Case Study

*Involving families in their children's learning can help children to overcome early disadvantage*



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At Sheringham Nursery School and Children's Centre, we build a trusting and collaborative partnership with families for the child's journey through nursery. For children with SEND, this partnership is exceptionally important.

We start by making sure that when we first meet the families, we welcome them confidently and express a desire to work with them to support their child. Any signs of panic or anxiety about their child's needs would be detrimental.

We then do 2 things to start building a partnership:

- Visit the family at home
- Invite the child and their family to visit us, prior to them starting

All our work is underpinned by:

- actively listening to the family's concerns at every stage
- using the family's knowledge about their child

This case study shows how we have been working with the family of two-year-old Jason who has complex needs.

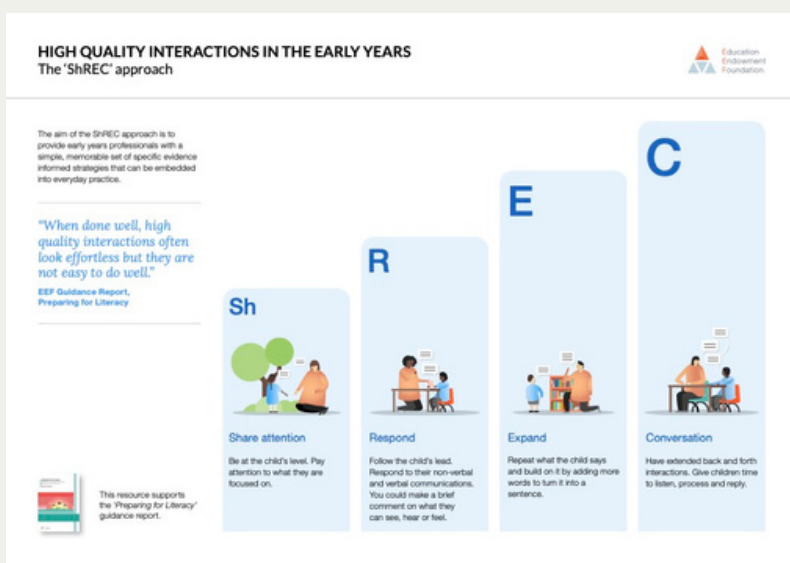
## Case study: working with the parents of a child with SEND



When Jason arrived, he was preverbal, communicating by making sounds and using gestures. He had limited eye contact and presented as passive.

Jason's parents were feeling anxious about his delayed communication but found it hard to accept that he had difficulties. The key person and SENDCO established a warm relationship with the family, which helped Jason to settle in.

The team put in a range of strategies to help Jason communicate his wants and needs, such as using the ShREC approach and a core vocabulary board to help him point to the symbols. It was important to help him to take part in play and learning, rather than drift around the nursery with a member of staff following him.



Our SENDCO met with Jason's family, listening carefully to their concerns and anxieties. In response to these, she arranged for an initial assessment with a speech and language therapist. This resulted in suggestions for both the family and nursery to follow. She then recommended that Jason should be referred for an Autism assessment. His parents found this difficult to hear and were very upset. Our SENDCO gave them plenty of time to discuss their worries and invited them to a parent network group and parent WhatsApp group. This enabled Jason's parents to talk to other families whose children had Autism or social communication difficulties.

Jason's family now attend regular workshops at the Children's Centre, including Signalong and the Triple P Stepping Stones parenting programme.

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Our SENDCO sends weekly videos to Jason's family, modelling strategies they could use to support his communication and language. She has also created a plan for Jason, which staff and the family collaborate in reviewing regularly.

Jason has daily intensive support from both practitioners and his family. He can now say some single words and is able to sustain his attention for short periods.

Jason's family can see his progress and now understand that what might look like small steps are huge for him.

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### Useful reading:

[Using the ShREC approach to support early communication](#): Education Endowment Foundation blog by Fliss James

[What to expect in the Early Years Foundation Stage: a guide for parents](#)

[The guidance for the Progress Check at Age 2](#): details about working with parents if their child might have SEND



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